

American GirlTM

January/February 2005

\$3.95

Are You a Spender
or a Saver? Take
Our **Quiz!**

Solve a **Mystery**

Have a Chocolate
Slumber Party

Make Sparkly
Hearts

Plus!
Friends every
girl should
have

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See AG Online!

Visit americangirl.com to peek behind the scenes of AG magazine!

Always get a parent's permission before surfing the Web or giving out your full name, address, or any other personal info.



Bead My Valentine

Make pretty hearts that sparkle and shine.

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The Truth About Adoption

Girls answer all your questions about what it's like to be adopted.

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About the Cover

Meet Kristin I., age 10. We asked her to choose her winter favorites.

Groundhog Day or Valentine's Day?

Valentine's Day

Skiing, sledding, ice skating, or snowboarding?

Skiing. It's something I can do with my whole family that's fun for all of us.

Hot chocolate with marshmallows, or without?

With. I put in five!

Kristin I.

To see more pictures from our photo shoot, go to "Behind the Scenes" on page 49.



Letters from You



A New Look

I love your new look! I liked the old style, but this one is much better. I love all of your new additions, like AG Art Gallery. All good magazines need a little makeover once in a while!

Allie H.
Age 12, Texas



Wonderful Waffles

I loved "Top Your Waffles" in the September/October 2004 issue. All of those waffles were so good and were so easy to make. I made a mini café for my family, and I served all your waffle ideas. It was really fun, and my family thought the waffles were delicious!

Sidney S.
Age 13, California

Win It!

On page 19, you'll read about our latest Win It! contest. Enter by sending your first and last name and your address by February 15 to:

Win It!—J/F 05
American Girl magazine
8400 Fairway Place
Middleton, WI 53562



Positively A+



Thank you so much for "A Fresh Start" in September/October. I started middle school this year, and that article helped me. I was pretty nervous about going to a new school, and your positive-thinking tips helped!

Ali C.
Age 11, California



Write to Us!

Want to drop us a line? Write us at:

American Girl magazine

8400 Fairway Place
Middleton, WI 53562

You can also send letters via e-mail to
im_agmag_editor@americangirl.com.

Either way, be sure to include your first and last name and your birth date. We can't use every letter we receive, but we read and learn from each one.

Official Rules

1. Drawing not open to employees of American Girl and its affiliates.
2. Only one entry per family.
3. To be valid, all entries must be received by mail by February 15, 2005. Entries may not be faxed or e-mailed.
4. All entries become the property of American Girl and will not be returned.
5. Void where prohibited by law.

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AMERICAN GIRL® (ISSN 1062-7812, Canadian Sales Agreement Number 40635507) is published bimonthly by Pleasant Company Publications, 8400 Fairway Place, Middleton, WI 53562. Copyright © 2005 by American Girl, LLC. All rights reserved. Subscription rates: One year (six issues) \$22.95. Canadian subscriptions \$29 U.S. Funds. Single issues (current or back copies) \$3.95. Prices subject to change. Periodical postage paid at Madison, Wisconsin, and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to American Girl, P.O. Box 37313, Boone, IA 50037-0313.

CUSTOMER SERVICE: 1-800-234-1278. SUBSCRIBE: Send change of address information six weeks before moving to American Girl, P.O. Box 5534, Harlan, IA 51593-1034. Send old address label (recent mailing label in best), new address, and new telephone number, or call 1-800-234-1278. EDITORIAL OFFICE: American Girl, Editorial Department, P.O. Box 620986, Middleton, WI 53562-0986. Pleasant Company Publications cannot accept liability for loss or damage of photographs or other materials. Unsolicited materials will be returned only if accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope. ALL COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS RECEIVED BY AMERICAN GIRL BECOME THE PROPERTY OF AMERICAN GIRL AND MAY BE USED WITHOUT COMPENSATION OR ACKNOWLEDGMENT. American Girl®, Proud to Be an American Girl®, Girls Express®, and Mini Mag® are trademarks owned by American Girl, LLC. American Girl trademarks cannot be used without the express written consent of American Girl, LLC. ISBN 1-59399-037-1.

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION OF American Girl, Publication No. 1062-7812. Filing date: 9/28/04. Issue frequency: Bimonthly. No. issues published annually: 6. Annual subscription price: \$22.95. Owner: Mattel, Inc. Headquarters: 333 Continental Blvd., El Segundo, CA 90245. Publisher: Diane Morgenthaler. Editor: Kristi Thom. Managing Editor: Barbara Stretchberry.

	Average no. copies each issue during preceding 12 months	Actual no. copies of single issue published nearest to filing date
A. Total number of copies (Net press run)	767,780	772,650
B. Paid circulation		
1. Paid/requested circ. mail subscriptions stated on Form 3541	663,886	638,967
2. Paid in-county subscriptions	0	0
3. Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors, counter sales, and other non-USPS paid distribution	30,362	34,823
4. Other classes mailed through the USPS	1,326	1,436
C. Total paid and/or requested circ.	695,573	675,226
D. Free distribution by mail		
1. Outside-county stated on Form 3541	210	33
2. In-county stated on Form 3541	0	0
3. Other classes mailed through USPS	N/A	N/A
E. Free distribution outside mail (Carriers or other means)	0	0
F. Total free distribution	210	33
G. Total distribution	695,783	675,259
H. Copies not distributed	71,997	97,391
I. Total (sum of G and H)	767,780	772,650
Percent paid and/or requested circulation	99.97%	100%

Illustrations: Mary Lynn Blasutta

Girls

E X P R E S S

Sweet Success

Amy S. knows how to use her bean—her cacao bean, that is. She makes her own chocolate!

Amy's chocolate making began as a fourth-grade assignment but became a passion.

"Most chocolate companies said I couldn't make chocolate at home because I'd need special factory machines," says the New Jersey girl, now 12.

But one chocolate expert disagreed. She believed in Amy and gave her a bag of cacao beans from Venezuela to help her project. Amy rigged a rotisserie grill, a fan, and pasta machines to copy chocolate manufacturing equipment. It took two years of sweet research to produce the first dark, shiny bar.

The best part of making her own chocolate? Being invited to demonstrate at the New York Chocolate Show and meeting a famous French chocolate maker. "He told me that I'd be able to do great things someday if I continued to have passion," Amy says.

Amy's chocolate process takes two weeks and makes only a few bars. She gives them to friends and family and enjoys them herself!



Amy designed her own wrappers for her chocolate bars, called Amy's Chocolate.



Photos: Jim Koper



Did You Know?

You'll flip for these fun facts!

Bring On Spring



February 20 is Northern Hemisphere Hoodie-Hoo Day, a day to chase away winter. At noon local time, run outside, wave your hands over your head, and shout, "Hoodie-Hoo!"

Buzzword



Myriad

How to say it: MEER-ee-ed

What it means: Countless

One way to use it: Emily used myriad colors in her final painting for art class.



The buzzword is tucked somewhere into this issue of *American Girl*. Can you find it? Answer is on page 42.

Find It!



Look for fun facts sprinkled throughout the magazine!

Candy Coating

These slick lip balms boast sweet candy scents. But how do they compare to the real thing?



Reese's Peanut Butter Cup lip balm

"It doesn't taste or smell like the candy it represents, and no lip balm should cost that much. It did un-chap my lips, though."



Junior Mints lip balm

"It gives your lips a good shine without color. It smells like Junior Mints and looks like chocolate."



\$3.50



Megan J.
Age 12, Maryland



\$4.50 for a two-pack



Sarah R.
Age 12, Maine

"Winter"

As I cuddle up in my hat and coat,
I'm just getting over my winter
sore throat.
I get all bundled up before I go out,
Then I see snowflakes swirling
about.
I drink my hot cocoa, sip after sip,
When I feel my nose get a bit
of a nip.
Now is the time to spread hugs and
good cheer,
Wishing all American girls a
wonderful year!



TINA G.
Age 12, Michigan



True Story

Kala G.'s friend moved to another country—
but came back one day to surprise her!



Dear American Girl,

My best friend, Kelsey, moved to Guatemala (which is in Central America) from where we lived in Kansas. I missed her so much. One day at school, my teacher told us to go wash our hands for lunch. When we went out to the sinks, Kelsey was standing right there! She and her family had come back to visit. I had NO idea that she was coming, but all my friends and family knew. I was so surprised! I ran over and gave her a big hug.

I got to leave school for the rest of that day and the next day to spend time with her. We had so much fun. We played games, watched our favorite movies, ate our favorite foods, and went shopping. It was the best time ever!

Sincerely,
Kala G.
Age 12, Kansas



Warm Fuzzies



It's a chilly time of year, and many people have no coats to keep them warm through the winter months. But there's a way to help those people.



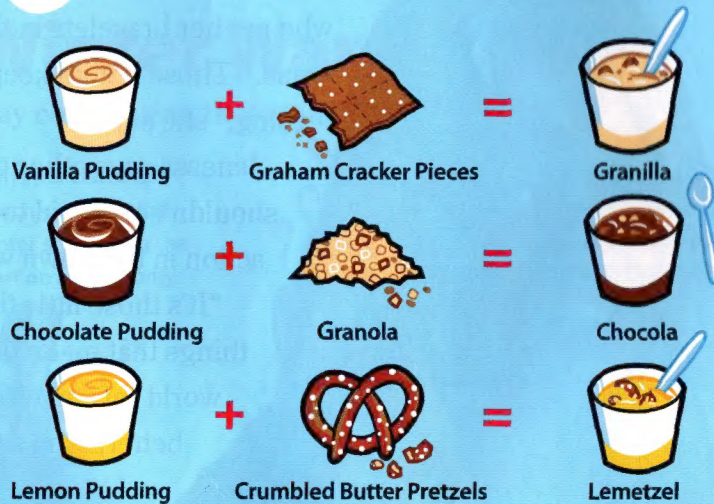
Anna A., a 9-year-old Oregon girl, collected 15 unused coats from family and friends. With the help of the national organization One Warm Coat, she donated them to a group that helps homeless people. One Warm Coat was created to help communities collect unwanted coats and deliver them free to people in need.

The winter had been very snowy, and "it felt good to help people who were cold," says Anna, who hopes to organize another coat collection soon.



Lunch Box

Boring pudding cup no more! Jazz up your cup with a pinch of crunch.



Creative Corner

Sparkle Flake



Cut out card. Flip over for directions.

AG Poll

In our September/October issue, we asked you about your favorite way to celebrate your birthday.



We learned that **489** of you liked slumber parties, **154** of you chose restaurants with family, and **72** of you opted for bowling with boy and girl pals.

Next question:

Are you TV crazy? Tell us how often you watch TV in a typical day.

Check your answer:

☐ More than 2 hours

☐ 1 to 2 hours

☐ Less than 1 hour

Do you think that's too much TV?

Check your answer:

☐ Yes

☐ No

Cut out your answer and mail it to us with your first and last name, address, and birth date.



Sparkle Flake

- 1 Use a dab of **glue** to join 2 mini or regular **craft sticks** in an "X" shape. Attach 2 more sticks with glue to finish snowflake shape. Let dry.
- 2 **Paint** snowflake with acrylic paint. While the paint is still wet, dip ends in **glitter**. Let dry.
- 3 Tie a piece of **string** around the center of the snowflake. Hang from a **suction cup** and place on your window!

Photo: Jamie Young

Help Wanted!

Do you do something that people your age don't usually get to do? Do you drive a race car? Are you the president of a company, a pilot, or a teacher? Write to us and tell us about it, and send a photo. Photos can't be returned, so copies are O.K. Deadline is February 10, 2005. Send your letter to *American Girl* magazine, 8400 Fairway Place, Middleton, WI 53562.



Circles of Hope

Jenessa L. was sad and scared when her uncle went to war in Iraq in March 2003.

When he left for duty, Jenessa slipped a yellow hair elastic around her wrist. She had heard the color yellow meant that you had a loved one in harm's way, and she wanted to leave the band in place until her uncle came home.

The band was always slipping off, so Jenessa decided to make a real bracelet. Since then, the Minnesota girl, now 13, and her many helpers around the country have made and shipped more than 100,000 of those bracelets to troops overseas and their families at home.

Jenessa has made bracelets with friends and classmates, as well as with troops and their families. She gives a bracelet for free to anyone who wants one. Several companies have donated bracelet supplies, and donations of money help her pay for shipping and other expenses.

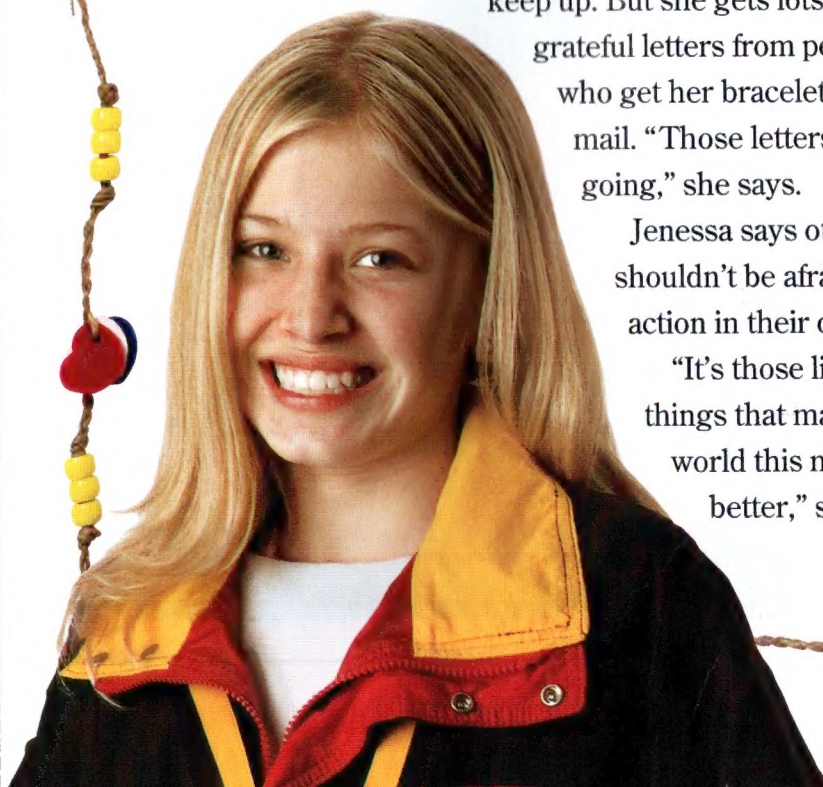
Jenessa worries sometimes that she won't be able to keep up. But she gets lots of grateful letters from people who get her bracelets in the mail. "Those letters keep us going," she says.

Jenessa says other girls shouldn't be afraid to take action in their own ways.

"It's those little tiny things that make the world this much better," she says.



Jenessa made bracelets with troops and their families at a military base.



AG Art Gallery

Enjoy this art sent in by AG readers like you.



Teresa R.
Age 11, Illinois



Bridget F.
Age 12, Illinois



Hayley D.
Age 8, California

We're looking for **artwork** for our gallery. Send **color** copies of your original artworks to the address on page 2. **Sorry**, we can't return entries.

Winter Warm-Up

Stay comfy using these toasty tricks.

Plan your outfit to match your favorite winter scarf. Keep the scarf on all day long.



Drop some spicy red hots into your mug of hot cocoa for a cinnamon boost.

Ask a parent to help you warm up your pajamas in the clothes dryer before bed.



Shining Star

Restrooms in buildings are big enough to fit wheelchairs. So why aren't they big enough in airplanes, too? That's what Rasha K. wants to know. The 10-year-old Texas girl has cerebral palsy, a brain condition that affects body movement and muscle control. Rasha gets around in a powered wheelchair that she drives by tapping a switch with her head.

Rasha and her mom fly overseas every year to visit relatives, and it's very difficult for Rasha to use the cramped restrooms on airplanes. So Rasha decided to try to change things. She started an online petition to government officials and the airlines, asking them to make airplane restrooms large enough for wheelchairs.

More than 13,000 people have signed the petition, and the list is growing. "You can make a difference if you are fighting for the right thing," Rasha says. ★



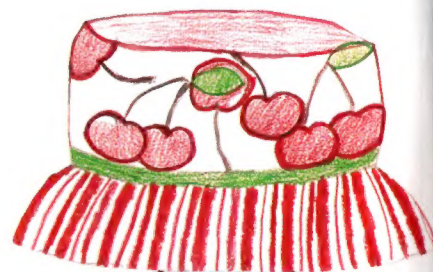
Rasha and her friend's dog, Sadie.

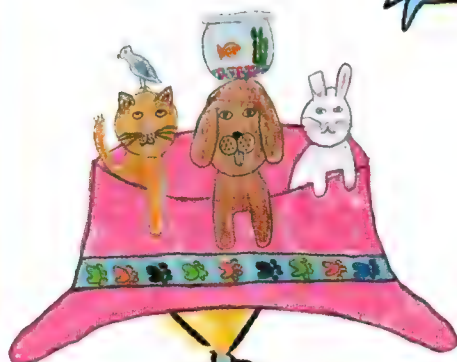
You can shine, too.
The world makes it hard for plenty of people to simply get around. Check with your school, church, or local volunteer agency for ways you can help.

Contest 

Heads Up!

When it comes to designing hats, AG readers are super stylish!





Sibling Spats

How can you and your siblings stop fighting once and for all? AG readers share their tricks for stopping a fight before it even starts!



When my older brother and I were younger, my

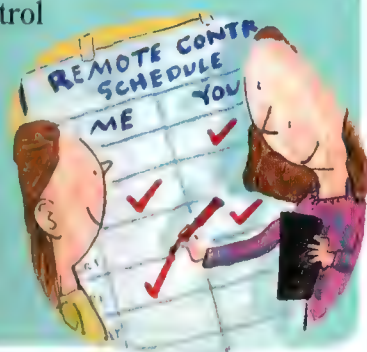
mom would give us each a roll of quarters when we would go on a vacation. Every time we fought, she would take a quarter away. It worked really well because we always wanted to keep the money!

Lara H.
Age 12, Iowa



Come up with a plan about things you usually disagree about. Have a routine for when you each get to hold the remote control or for who gets the best seat at the table. These plans help make the day more enjoyable because you know you won't be fighting.

Jillian A.
Age 12, Washington



I have five sisters and sometimes there's a lot of fighting! When they make me angry, one thing that helps me is to close my eyes and count to ten. Then I can calmly explain to them what is bothering me.

Linnea B.
Age 10, Michigan



When your siblings start getting rough or grumpy, or you start getting irritable, it helps to go into another room and be by yourself. That way, there's no one to argue with and you can't start a fight.

Abigail C.
Age 12, Texas



Siblings
need to agree
to disagree.

My sister and

I have different opinions
about a lot of things, but
when we agree to disagree
about something, it helps
keep the peace.

Stephanie A.
Age 13, Colorado



In order
to avoid a
squabble
with your

siblings, sometimes you
have to compromise or
make a deal. Then every-
one can be happy!

Clarice M.
Age 10, Texas

Speak from Your Heart

Next subject: Homesickness.

Sometimes it's really hard
to be away from home. Have
you ever been homesick?

Were you at overnight camp
for a few weeks, or just at
a friend's sleepover for a
night? How did you deal
with it? What can you do to
keep from being blue when
you're away from home?

Send answers, name, birth
date, and school photo
to the address on page 2.

Deadline: February 7,
2005. Some answers will
appear in the July/August
2005 issue. ★

Big Truth

**Remember: You
are in control.
It takes two
people to fight.**



Whenever
my sister
comes into
my room

just to annoy me, I simply
ignore her. After a while,
she gets bored and just
leaves. It works every time.

Claire K.
Age 12, Minnesota



When I'm
really angry
with one of
my sisters,

I go write my feelings down
in my journal. It's a good
way to share my thoughts
without hurting anyone or
getting into a big fight.

Hannah B.
Age 12, Kansas



Bead My Valentine

Make a sparkly heart for someone special on Valentine's Day.



YOU WILL NEED

 An adult to help you cut the wire

* Ruler

* 18-inch piece of 20-gauge (heavy) wire

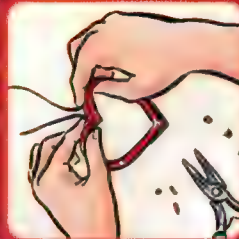
* Needle-nose pliers with wire cutter

* Heart-shaped cookie cutter

* 30 inches of 26- to 28-gauge (thin) wire


* Beads of varying sizes and shapes

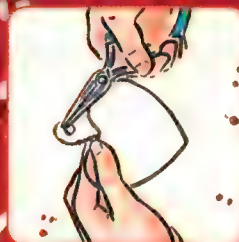
* Ribbon



1 Use the pliers to bend the heavy wire in half to make a V-shape. Shape heavy wire around the outside of a heart-shaped cookie cutter. ~~When you reach~~ the top indent of the heart, remove wire from the cookie cutter.



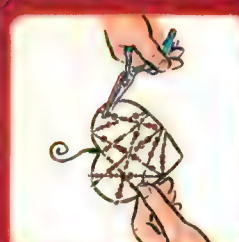
2  Tightly twist ends of wire together. Be careful with sharp ends. After twisting about 2 inches of wire, ask an adult to help you cut remaining wire.




3 Pinch end of wire with pliers and turn it to form spiral shape for hanger. Adjust heart shape with your fingers to finish shaping the heart.



4 Wind end of thin wire around base of spiral hanger until secure. Thread several beads on thin wire. Extend wire and attach it to another side of heart. Wrap wire at least twice around heart to secure.



5  Place more beads on thin wire and continue to wind wire in random pattern, adding beads as you go. When you have achieved the desired look, wind remaining thin wire around frame until secure, and ask an adult to trim excess. Tie on ribbon, and hang.



Quiz

Money Madness!



Are you a spender, a saver, or somewhere in between?
Take this quiz and find out.

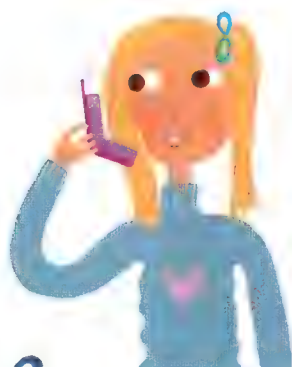
\$1 For the holidays, your aunt gave you a check for \$50. What did you do with it?

a. I spent it all on a trendy new pair of jeans. They're cool!

b. Good question! I think the check is still in the card—somewhere.

c. I put \$30 in my piggy bank, gave \$5 to charity, bought a shirt for \$8.99 (on sale), treated a friend to ice cream for \$4.50, and still have some change.

d. I deposited it all in my savings account and checked to see how much I have in there now.



\$2 You call your friend Morgan and ask if she wants to go see a movie tonight. She says she'd like to, but she doesn't have any money. What do you do?

a. I tell her it'll be my treat. I'll buy popcorn and candy, too.

b. I offer to lend her the money, even though she always forgets to pay me back.

c. I say I'll treat her but suggest that we go to a matinee because it's less expensive.

d. I invite her over to watch a movie at my house instead.

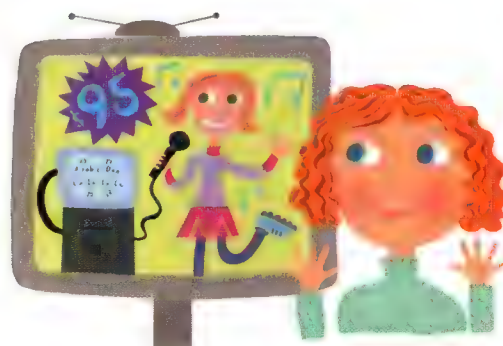
\$3 You see an ad for a great karaoke machine. Oh, no! It costs \$95. What do you do?

a. I empty my piggy bank, ask Mom for an advance on my allowance, borrow \$20 from my big brother, borrow \$10 from my little sister, and then go buy it.

b. I try to save up for it, but I never seem to have more than \$25 saved at one time.

c. I save half my allowance every week and watch to see if it goes on sale.

d. I decide to ask my parents for it for my birthday, if I still want it by then.



\$4 How much money is in your wallet right now?

- a. None. I spent it all.
- b.** I'm not sure where my wallet is, but there might be change at the bottom of my backpack.
- c. \$8.25.
- d. None. It's all in my bank.



\$5 Which sounds the most like you?

- a. When I'm out of money and see something I want to buy, I ask my friend for a loan. She usually says no because I haven't paid her back from the last time I borrowed from her.
- b. When I forget my lunch money (again), I have to borrow money (again).
- c.** At the mall, Mom lends me cash when I need it, but I pay her back when we get home.
- d. I almost never borrow money.

\$6 Your favorite singer's new CD comes out today. What do you do?

- a. I buy it. It'll be great!
- b. I look for a gift certificate I think I have that I'll use to buy it.
- c.** I'll wait to hear it before I buy it, in case I don't like it.
- d. I'll borrow it from a friend.



Answers

Mostly a's

If you circled mostly a's, you have the urge to splurge. You like to shop, but try to save half of the money you get. If you're tempted to buy something, think about it for at least a day before you do. Be careful about borrowing money, too, or you could get into trouble!



Mostly c's

If you circled mostly c's, you are careful with cash. You look for a good deal and think a purchase through before you buy. You spend some, you save some, and you're generous, too. Kudos to you for keeping your cash under control.



Mostly b's

If you circled mostly b's, you lose your loot. You're usually a smart spender, but you can't keep track of your cash. Get in the habit of keeping your wallet somewhere safe. It's O.K. to loan money to your friends, but make sure they pay you back.



Mostly d's

If you circled mostly d's, you stash your cash. It's great to save, because you'll have money when you need it, and saving up for something can be satisfying. Just remember that treating yourself once in a while is fun, too. ★

A dollar bill lasts only 18 months before it gets too worn to use.



Treat your friends to a slumber party that's chock-full of chocolate!


Invitation with Taste

Cut a piece of scrapbook paper to fit around a wrapped candy bar. Write party details on the back of the paper.

Wrap paper around candy bar and secure with tape. Decorate the outside with stickers and the guest's name.




Stir It Up

 Ask an adult to melt different kinds of baking chips—such as peanut butter, chocolate, or butterscotch—in small microwavable bowls. Fill several more small bowls with a variety of stir-ins, such as candy sprinkles, mini

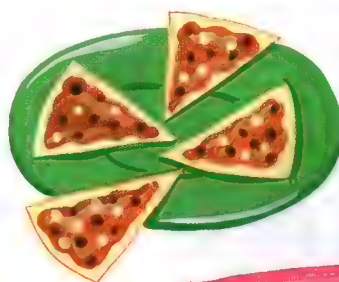
marshmallows, or crushed candies. Dip plastic spoons into melted chips. Set on wax paper or aluminum foil. Sprinkle with your favorite candy treat. Let cool. Use spoon to stir your hot cocoa and make it extra sweet.



S'more Nachos

 Fold flour tortillas into quarters. Unfold and tear along the fold lines. Lightly spray cookie sheet with cooking spray. Place the tortilla quarters onto the cookie sheet. Spread tortilla pieces with creamy

peanut butter. Top with mini marshmallows and mini chocolate chips. Have an adult bake nachos at 475 degrees until marshmallows are golden. You'll definitely want s'more!



The Chocolate Game

Play this fun game from Germany. Before the party, wrap a chocolate bar several times in gift wrap. Ask everyone to sit in a circle. Put the wrapped chocolate bar in the middle, along with a scarf, a hat, and a pair of large gloves. Players take turns rolling 2 dice. When a player's roll totals 6, she puts on the hat, scarf, and gloves and tries to rip open the package. Players continue to roll the dice while the one girl is trying to open the gift. If she breaks off a small piece of chocolate, she must pick it up and set it aside (no eating!). She does as much as she can until someone else rolls a 6 and gets a turn.





Oopsa-loompahs

Rent the movie *Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory*. Watch for these and other movie mishaps:

Look for at least four instances of "bad hair" that suddenly corrects itself in the next shot.

Charlie watches TV to hear about the golden ticket, but when he turns around to talk to Grandpa, the TV is off.

Look as Charlie is lifted in the Fizzy Lifting Drinks room—you can see there's a harness that lifts him up!

Dear Baby Ruth

Write the names of chocolate candy bars (for example, Crunch, Baby Ruth, Milky Way, Mars) on slips of paper. Put all of the slips into a bowl. Divide into 2 teams and have each team pick an even number of slips. Provide

a piece of paper and a pen for each team. Set a timer for 3 minutes. Have each team write a letter to a famous person using all the names of the candy bars. The sillier, the better!





Sweet Scramble

Pass out paper and pencils and ask everyone to write as many words as she can find in HOT CHOCOLATE.

Give each girl a Hug or Kiss (chocolate, of course!) for each word she finds.




Special Delivery

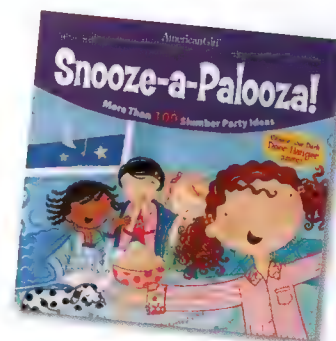
- 1 To deliver a special chocolate pizza, put 4 cups mini marshmallows, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup butter or margarine, and 1 cup chocolate chips in a microwavable bowl.
- 2  Ask an adult to microwave on HIGH one minute. Stir in 6 cups chocolate-flavored crisp rice cereal. Press mixture into one large greased round pizza pan—or two small ones. Set aside.
- 3  Ask an adult to melt 1 cup white chocolate chips in the microwave. Use a fork to drizzle white chocolate over "crust," leaving a small plain edge. Add maraschino cherry slices for "pepperoni" and diced gummy worms for "onions" and "green peppers."
- 4 When it's time to serve, cut with a pizza cutter into wedge-shaped pieces.



Morning Chippers

-  Have an adult add 1 cup chocolate chips, $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon vanilla, and 1 tablespoon sugar to your favorite pancake-batter recipe. Top plate-sized

pancakes with dollops of whipped cream and maraschino cherries. Wash them down with—what else?—chocolate milk!



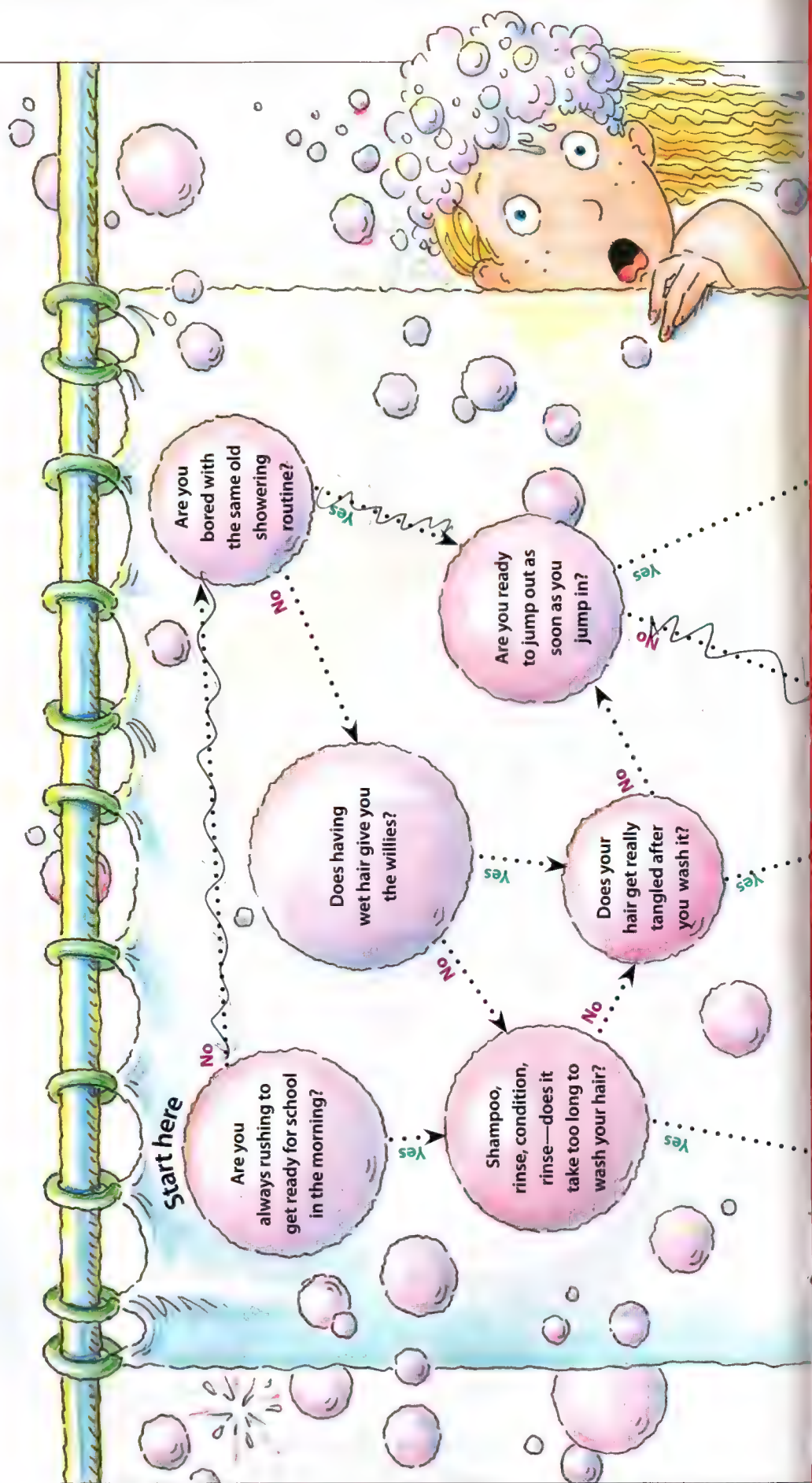
The average person eats 12 pounds of chocolate per year!



For more super sleepover ideas, check out *Snooze-a-Palooza!*—available in bookstores this spring. ★

Bubble Trouble?

Do you cower when it's time to shower? Are your mornings filled with madness? Follow the bubble trail for tub tips!



Do you wish there was a speedier way to get clean?

No

Yes

Timely Tips

It sounds like you need to save time in the shower.

- * Try showering at night instead of in the morning, and you won't feel so rushed before school.
- * Don't use too much shampoo! A small squirt is all you need, and it will rinse out faster than a handful will.
- * Save time by using a combo of shampoo and conditioner.
- * Try a liquid body wash, which lathers up quickly, to clean yourself. You'll be towel-drying off in no time!

Is taking care of your hair a hassle?

No

Yes

Hair Scare

All tangled up? Try these tips for easier hair care.

- * If you have long hair that takes forever to dry, try a stylish shorter cut.
- * Make sure you get your hair trimmed regularly to help prevent tangles.
- * Don't rub your hair dry. Instead, pat it dry with a towel. It won't get as tangled.
- * No-tears shampoo isn't just for babies! If you cry just thinking about getting shampoo in your eyes, try a kind made just for kids.

Do you just want showering to be more fun?

Shower Power

If showering is a snore, it's time for a new routine.

- * If you've been using the same bath products for a long time, try a new brand of soap or shampoo. A fresh scent will perk you up!
- * There are lots of cute sponges and scrubbies available that are more fun than a washcloth.
- * If you usually wash from head to toe, next time try washing from toe to head.
- * Sing your favorite tunes while you shower—your voice will sound great! ★

The Friendship Buffet

There are many different types of friends. See if you have a good balance of buds to fill your friendship plate!

by Patti Kelley Criswell

Friends Every Girl Should Have



True BLUE

This friend has seen you at your best and at your worst—and she loves you just the same. You can talk to her about anything at any time, or you can just sit silently with her and still feel comfortable. This girl will be your friend 'til the end!

True-Blue Qualities

- * Great for a pep talk
- * Makes you feel 100% comfortable when you're with her
- * Picks you up when you are down
- * Won't judge you
- * Knows you inside and out

The Giggling Girl!

This friend is just plain fun! When you're with her, you giggle at the silliest things. If you're feeling down, she'll have you rolling on the floor laughing in no time.

Giggling-Girl Qualities

- * Makes you laugh! (and laugh and laugh...)
- * Takes a bad situation and turns it around by making you smile
- * Turns the most boring activity into a ton of fun
- * Always entertains you





The Go-To Girl

Every girl needs a friend she can go to when she needs some advice. Maybe this friend is an older family member—your big sister, your cousin, or your aunt. She tells you what she thinks is best for you, even if it's not what you want to hear. She always makes you feel like everything will be O.K.

Go-To-Girl Qualities

- * Honest and straightforward when giving you advice
- * 100% trustworthy
- * Has a good perspective on any problems you have
- * Cares about what's best for you

Casual Friend

This friend shares an interest with you. Maybe you're on the same soccer team or take dance lessons together. The two of you might hang out only at your shared activities, but when you're together, it's great. Just make sure that you don't keep score on who's "better" at whatever you have in common. Be supportive and keep it fun.

Casual-Friend Qualities

- * Shares your interests
- * Gets you outside of your normal group of friends
- * Motivates you to practice more





=Faraway=Friend

You and this girl have stayed close, even though she's far away. You don't have to talk every day to stay friends, but hearing from her brings a smile to your day. You always pick right up where you left off, and if you get to visit each other, it's nothing but fun!

Faraway-Friend Qualities

- * Helps you to learn about life in a different town
- * Brightens your day with an e-mail or a postcard
- * Gives a fresh and fair perspective on your problems since she doesn't know all of your friends



Delightfully Different

There's never a dull moment with this friend, because she *isn't* just like you. Maybe she's from a different culture—or maybe she's a *he*. This friend challenges you to be creative and try new things. Enjoy this friendship—variety is the spice of life!

Delightfully-Different Qualities

- * Has interests that are not the same as yours
- * Encourages you to try new ways of doing things
- * Makes you think, "Oh, I never thought of it that way!"

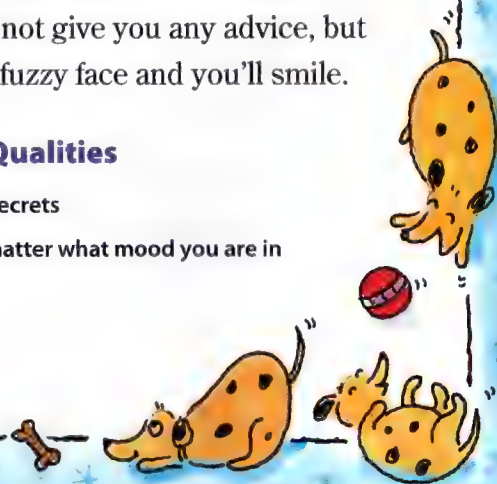


Furry Friend

This friend might be your pet dog, your neighbor's kitty, or your favorite stuffed animal. No matter what she is, she's the one who listens to you and never judges you. She might not give you any advice, but one look at her fuzzy face and you'll smile.

Furry-Friend Qualities

- * Never tells your secrets
- * Accepts you no matter what mood you are in
- * Is always loyal



Friends Every Girl Can Do Without



Bossy Bud

This girl sets the rules in your friendship. She might make you feel uncomfortable if you aren't dressed "right" or if you disagree with her. She decides what activity you're going to do and when you're going to do it. If she doesn't respect your opinions or thoughts, then the friendship might not be worth it.

The Bully

This girl is most likely nice to you, but she has no problem being cruel to other people. Remember that it's not right to back her up when she bullies others, so tell her that it isn't O.K. If she doesn't get the message, then it's time to back away from the friendship.

Competitive Gal

This friend is constantly competing with you. If you biked for three miles, she biked for four. Every girl has different strengths—so be proud of yours and don't get caught up in the competition game. If this girl always wants to let you know how she did better than you, tell her, "That's great. You must really be proud!" and change the subject. Sooner or later she will realize it's not all about her.



Loose-Lipped Chum

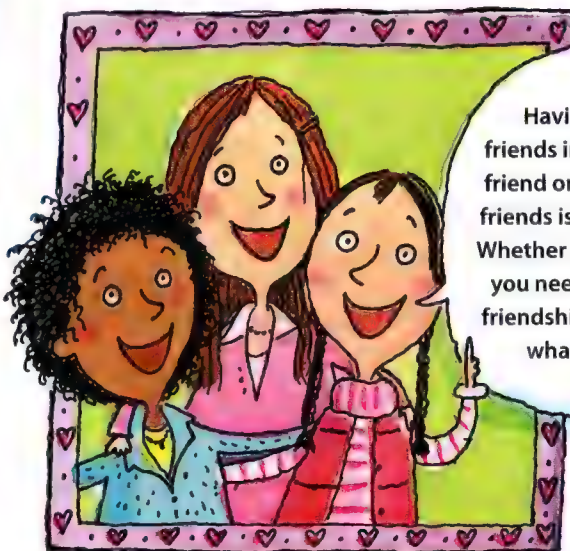
It's great to have a friend to confide in—but not if she's going to tell everyone else your secrets. Being trustworthy is the basic rule of good friendship. If she can't zip her lips, maybe your friendship should be limited to small talk.



On-Again, Off-Again Friend

This is a friend who loves hanging out with you—when it's convenient for her. Maybe you have a trampoline and she invites herself over to use it. But when you're at the mall later with a group of friends, she acts like you don't exist.

If she doesn't want to acknowledge you when it's not "cool," then she isn't a friend worth having. Your friends should respect you—no matter what.



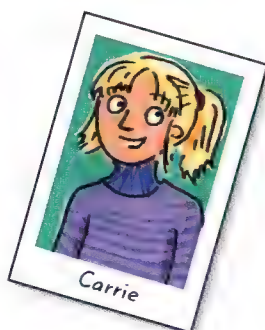
Having a variety of friends instead of one best friend or just one group of friends is a great way to go. Whether you want to talk or you need a good laugh, a friendship buffet gives you what you need! ★

Are you a super sleuth?
See if you can solve this
mystery! To read the answer
at the end of the story, hold
the page up to a mirror.

The Missing WhizGizmo

by Elizabeth McDavid Jones

Grace Ann has the best science project ever.
The question is, where did it go?



"Ah, there they are," Grace Ann said, pulling a bag of marshmallows out of a kitchen cabinet. "Mom has to hide these from Dad so he can't throw them out."

She plunked two fat marshmallows into each of the four mugs of steaming hot cocoa on the countertop, then brought the mugs to the kitchen table.

All of Grace Ann's friends were there—except for Kimberley, who was late, as usual. Kimberley, Carrie, and Grace Ann had all grown up on the same block. Last fall Kimberley had moved away to



a different neighborhood and Carrie had started middle school. Their newest friend was Erika, who had recently moved into the house behind Grace Ann's. Since the girls all went to different schools, they tried to get together often to stay in touch.

Grace Ann passed a mug to each girl. "Does your dad have a grudge against marshmallows?" Erika asked.

"More like a war," said Grace Ann. "Dad's the pastry chef at La Fansay restaurant, and he can't stand to have any processed foods 'polluting' the kitchen."

The other girls laughed. "Your dad is a great cook," said Carrie. "He's practically world famous for his lemon tarts."

At that moment Kimberley, her face flushed

from the cold, tramped into the kitchen. She and Grace Ann had been friends so long, she never knocked. She just parked her bike on the back patio and came in through the den door. "That wind is wicked," Kimberley said.

"You rode your bike in this weather?" Erika asked, eyes wide.

"Kimberley rides her bike all the time," said Carrie, shaking her head.

Kimberley sat down. "Sorry I'm late. I had to go by the library and find some books on projects for the science fair. Not that I want to enter. But 'not entering is not an option'—my mom's exact words."

"Kimberley's parents are both scientists," Grace Ann explained to Erika.

"Wish I could snap my fingers and have this science project done," Kimberley said. She slurped noisily at her hot cocoa, pretending not to notice Carrie's rolled eyes.

"Yeah," echoed Erika, twisting a strand of hair around her finger. "That'd be great. It's been so hard for me to make friends at my new school. I wish you all went to Doowell Academy, too. What I need is a really brilliant science fair project to make me look good in front of everybody."

"Me, too," said Carrie. "You know, in middle

school, they make you enter. It's a huge part of your grade. And believe me, I could use a good grade in science this year." She took a dainty sip from her mug and cut her eyes to Kimberley. Kimberley responded with another loud slurp.

"Grace Ann," Erika started, "are you going to enter the science fair?"

Kimberley snorted. "Are you kidding? Grace Ann's the original science whiz kid. She's probably had her project done for weeks."

"Or months," said Carrie.

Grace Ann licked chocolate from her lip and grinned. "Well, it's not finished yet. But give me a day or two, and the WhizGizmo should be ready for viewing."



"The WhizGizmo?" Erika asked.

"Oh, she always comes up with some snazzy name for her project," said Kimberley. "And always gets an A plus. Nothing Grace Ann does is ordinary."

"Grace Ann, you make me sick," Carrie said. "But I love you just the same." She paused, running a finger around the rim of her mug. "You guys don't know how much I've missed you."

"Yeah, it's too bad you have to babysit your little brother, Peter, on weekday afternoons since your mom starting taking classes," said Grace Ann.

"And with all the homework they give in middle school, I never have any time to myself," said Carrie. "But this week my grandma's staying with us, so for a few glorious days, I'm free of pesky Peter!" Carrie proclaimed. Then she



looked down into her mug and frowned. "I just wish I didn't have to spend the time working on my science project."

"Yeah," agreed Kimberley, looking glum. "The whole rest of the week is going to be a bummer, nothing but work. And right before Valentine's Day, too."

"We might as well skip Valentine's Day," said Carrie dismally.

"Valentine's Day—sabotaged by schoolwork," agreed Erika.

"Hey," Grace Ann said, "cheer up! I'll have a Valentine's party at my house Friday afternoon. I'll get my dad to make his lemon tarts and we'll make valentines. What do you say?"

The other girls exchanged glances and then broke into smiles.

"I say Valentine's Day is saved!" proclaimed Kimberley.



Carrie asked, "Am I the last one here for the party?" as Grace Ann opened the front door to her on Friday afternoon. "I just got my hair cut, and the stylist took forever."

"No, Kimberley's not here yet," said Grace Ann, closing the door behind Carrie. "But Erika is in the dining room already, starting on her valentines."

Carrie was staring at her new hairdo in the hall mirror. In its reflection, she could see Erika working at the dining room table. "Hey, Erika," she called without turning around. "Do you think my hair's too short?"

"No," said Erika. "It's perfect, as usual."

"I like it," Grace Ann said.

"Thanks," said Carrie. Then she added, "Kimberley's here."

"How do you know?" marveled Erika.

"By looking in the mirror," said Carrie, pointing to it. "You can see back into the den from here. She's hanging up her coat and backpack by the back door."

"You could come in that way, too, Erika, from now on," said Grace Ann. "It'd be convenient for you since you live in back of me."

"O.K.," said Erika.

Then Kimberley trotted up the hallway. "See you got a haircut, Carrie," she said. "Kinda short, isn't it?"

Carrie clenched her teeth. "I like it short."

"That's good," Kimberley said, breezing past her. "Cuz it's *really* short." She sniffed the air. "Mmmm, Grace Ann, your dad must be baking the tarts. When do we eat?"

"We'll have refreshments after we finish making valentines," said Grace Ann. "I've got



lots of lace and sequins and stuff. Come on."

They all went into the dining room and worked for nearly an hour, measuring and cutting and gluing. "Listen," Grace Ann said. "Before we eat, let's go see the WhizGizmo." The girls followed Grace Ann to her bedroom next to the den, all of them eager to see exactly what a WhizGizmo looked like.

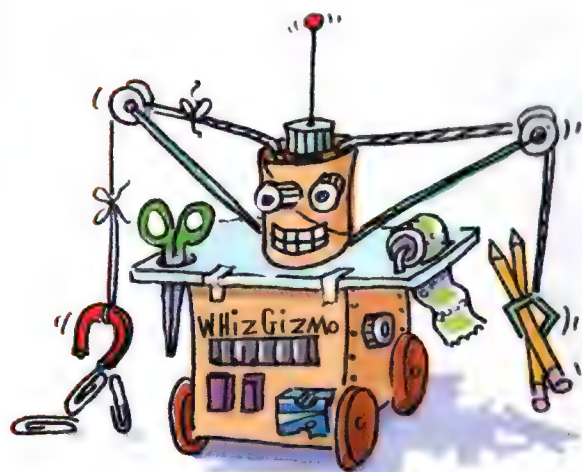
"Ta-da!" Grace Ann said, smiling with outstretched arms.

The girls stared in amazement at the shoe-box-sized combination of batteries, wires, switches, wheels, and gears that sat on Grace Ann's desk. "So...this is the WhizGizmo?" Kimberley asked tentatively.

Grace Ann nodded proudly.

"What does it do?" asked Erika.

Grace Ann explained that the WhizGizmo



was part robot, part office aide, and part entertainment. It could do myriad tasks, from fetching pencils to opening envelopes. "And it's got a radio inside, so you can listen to your favorite tunes while it works," said Grace Ann.

"Wow, Grace Ann, you're a genius," said Carrie. "You're a cinch for another A plus. If only I could come up with something half as good, I'd be happy."

"I still haven't thought of a thing," said Kimberley glumly.

Then Grace Ann's dad called, "Ten minutes till tart time!"

"Hey, let's finish those valentines," Grace Ann said.

The girls trooped back into the dining room. Kimberley picked up her valentines and stared at them unhappily. "You know, they just need some pizzazz. A little splash of color, maybe," she said.

"I have a box of ribbon in my desk drawer," said Grace Ann. "Help yourself."

Kimberley returned with some brightly colored ribbons and set to work arranging them and gluing them onto her valentines.

While the girls were working, they made plans to get together the next day and go to the mall. They decided to meet at Grace Ann's at ten o'clock. Then they cleared and set the table for the tarts.

"Oh, my gosh," Carrie said, suddenly glancing at her watch. "I didn't realize how late it was.

I've got to go, guys." She started to gather up her valentines.

"But we're getting ready to eat!" Grace Ann protested. "Don't you want to try Dad's tarts?"

"I can't, really," Carrie said, already getting her coat. "I've got to babysit my brother, and I'm already late!" She was out the front door before anyone could even say good-bye.





"Gosh, she really was in a hurry," said Erika.
 "Too bad she has to miss the tarts," said Kimberley. "Here they come!"

The girls watched eagerly as Grace Ann's father brought in a tray of steaming tarts and placed it on the table. Red juice oozed from the flaky pastries, making the girls' mouths water.

"Dad, you didn't make your lemon tarts at all," said Grace Ann, looking surprised.
 "You made—"

"Cherry!" he said, grinning. "For Valentine's Day!"



"Oh, boy!" the girls cried, and dug in. They all exclaimed about how the cherry tarts were even better than the lemon ones. When they'd eaten two tarts apiece, Kimberley said she had better head home before it started to get dark. She put her valentines in her backpack, grabbed her coat, and headed out toward her bike.

Erika stated she should be getting home, too. "Unfortunately, the science project still looms," she said, getting her coat and heading down the hallway toward the den. "I'm using the back door, Grace Ann, like you said."

"Yeah, fine," Grace Ann said. "I'm going to help my dad clean up. See you tomorrow."

That night, none of the girls was able to rid from her mind thoughts of the wonderful WhizGizmo.

On Saturday morning, Erika was just opening Grace Ann's back door when Kimberley arrived.

"Look who's here on time for once," said Grace Ann as her friends came up the hallway.

"Can't miss those great sales at the mall," Kimberley teased. Everyone knew Kimberley had no interest in shopping, except at the sporting goods store.

"I'm glad you two are here," said Grace Ann. "There was something I wanted us to do before we went to the mall. I've got a problem I want you to help me solve. Actually, it's more like a mystery—"

"A mystery!" Kimberley interrupted. "You know how I love mysteries!"

"Well...I'm not sure you're going to like this one," said Grace Ann.

"Why not?" asked Erika, smiling. "Solving mysteries is fun."

"Not if you're the suspects," Grace Ann said glumly, avoiding her friends' eyes. "I wish I didn't have to say this, but there's no other explanation. Someone at the party yesterday stole my WhizGizmo!"

"I can't believe you think one of us would swipe your science project!" said Kimberley.

Grace Ann shook her head in dismay. "Well, it was definitely here during the party—you all saw it—and it was definitely gone when I went into my room Friday night. The WhizGizmo didn't just up and walk away!"

"You're right," said Kimberley, sounding resigned. "Any one of us could have taken the WhizGizmo. We were all envious of Grace Ann because she had finished her project and none of us had even started on ours."



Erika put a hand on her hip. "Yeah, so? And just *when* were we supposed to have committed this crime? We were all together during the whole party!"

"Well," Kimberley said tentatively. "Did you leave through the den yesterday?"

"Yeah," said Erika. "So?"

"So you were the last to leave. You could

have swiped it on your way out," Kimberley said, looking directly at Erika.

Erika narrowed her eyes and looked at Kimberley. "I could have, but I didn't. But what about you, Kimberley? You went back to Grace Ann's room alone, remember?"

"I did not!" Kimberley declared.

"You did, Kimberley," Grace Ann said gently. "You went back to my room to get some ribbon."

Kimberley looked sheepish. "Oh, yeah. Guess I did. But where would I have hidden the WhizGizmo?"

"In your backpack," said Erika. "Carrie said she saw it in the den. You could have stashed the WhizGizmo there."

"I could have, but I didn't!" Kimberley said angrily. She crossed her arms and turned her back on Erika.

"Well, I didn't either!" Erika said, and she turned her back on Kimberley.

"Guys!" Grace Ann said. "This is exactly what I didn't want to happen! I thought, like a fool, that we could put our heads together and figure it out!"

For a second, the three of them stood there, glaring at each other. Then the doorbell rang. Grace Ann snatched the doorknob and yanked the door open. It was Carrie.

"Hey, I could hear you guys outside," Carrie said, entering. "What's all the yelling about?"



Grace Ann heaved a sigh, her anger gone. "Hi, Carrie," she said miserably. "Thought you'd forgotten."

"I way overslept," said Carrie, "but then my grandma ran me over here in the car. I'm glad you guys didn't leave without me."

Grace Ann said, "How'd it go babysitting your brother yesterday?"

Carrie shrugged. "O.K., I guess. But I hated missing your dad's cherry tarts. Bet they were great. Hey, what's the matter with those two?" She nodded her head toward Erika and Kimberley, who were still scowling at each other. "I thought we were going to the mall, but you guys look like you're going to a funeral. What gives?"

"I'll tell you what gives," Erika said bitterly. "Somebody at the party yesterday swiped Grace Ann's WhizGizmo, and Kimberley thinks it was me!"

"I didn't say it was you, Erika," said Kimberley. "I said it *could have been* you. It could've been any of us."



"Well, that means it could've been Carrie, too!" Erika proclaimed.

Kimberley gave Carrie a sly look, then said slowly, "Yeah, it could have been you,

Carrie. You were the first to leave. And nobody saw the WhizGizmo after you left."

"Just one problem with your theory," Carrie said. "Everyone saw me leave. And I *didn't* have the WhizGizmo."

Erika's shoulders slumped. "Yeah, she's right, Kimberley. It couldn't have been Carrie."

Kimberley looked gloomy. "So we're right back where we started. You and I are the prime suspects."

Grace Ann nodded slowly. "Yeah, I think it's pretty clear who took the WhizGizmo. It had to be—"

Who does Grace Ann think took the WhizGizmo?



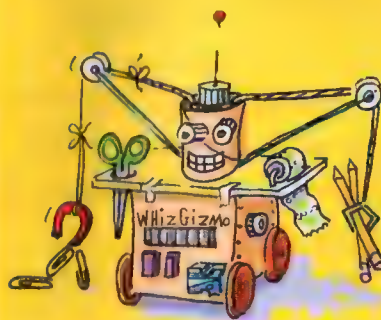
Answer: Grace Ann named Carrie!

Grace Ann became suspicious when Carrie said that her grandmother brought her over in the car. If Carrie's grandmother was still in town, why did Carrie need to leave the party early to babysit her brother?

Carrie slipped up again when she mentioned to Grace Ann that she had hated missing her dad's cherry tarts. Carrie left the party before the tarts were served. It would have been natural for Carrie to assume that the tarts were lemon, since that was the original plan. Carrie couldn't possibly have known they were cherry tarts unless she had come back later after the tarts had been served.

Carrie confessed. She admitted that she was failing science and needed a great project in order to pass. When she saw the WhizGizmo, temptation got the better of her. After leaving the party by the front door, she sneaked back in through the door in the den and swiped the WhizGizmo. As she left, she heard the girls talking about the cherry tarts.

Carrie tearfully apologized to Grace Ann and promised to return the WhizGizmo. Grace Ann accepted the apology and offered to help Carrie with her project. ★





The Truth About Adoption

We **asked** AG readers
what they wanted to know
about being **adopted**.

Meet four girls who
answer your questions.



My name is Leah B., and I was adopted shortly after I was born. My birth mother made an adoption plan for me because she was very young and didn't think she would be able to take care of me well enough. I think that makes her a really responsible person.

My adoptive parents did all the paperwork, and they got to take me home when

I was about three months old.

I look like my adoptive parents. Some kids don't, and they have to answer a lot of questions because people can tell they are adopted. I really don't think about my adoption that much. I love my parents, and I am proud we are a family.

For me, it feels very normal to be adopted. I'm 11 years old now, but my parents told me about my

adoption when I was very young, so I've always known about it. It's not like it's a big deal or a secret or anything.

I think I would be mad if my parents hadn't told me about being adopted. That would make it seem like there was something wrong with being adopted. One time, a kid in my class said it was bad to be adopted, but it's really not. It's just interesting and a little different.

It's nice to know other people who are adopted. It's disappointing when I end up in a class where no one else is adopted. When I have a classmate or teacher who has been adopted, I feel like we have something in common.

Sometimes I think about my birth mother, but I don't remember her. The only parents I know are my adoptive parents, and they're the only ones I want.

Meet

Leah



This is Leah's dad Bob, Leah, and mom Wendy.

Photo: Michael Weinstein

Meet Kylie



Photo: Andy Manis

This is Kylie's sister Kaitie, mom Lorie, Kylie, dad Fred, and brother Keegan.

My name is Kylie M., and I was adopted from an orphanage in China. I was 18 months old when my parents came to get me. They waited a long time and worked hard to get me. Lots of family and friends met us at the airport when we finally came back from China.

I'm nine now, and I am a U.S. citizen. I have always known that I was adopted. Even though I have black hair and dark brown eyes in a family full of blonds and

redheads, I never feel left out or different. I always forget that I am adopted. I just feel like part of the family.

Sometimes people ask insensitive questions, like about why I look so different from my parents. We just tell them we're not comfortable talking about it with them but that we're very happy with who we are as a family.

My parents and my doctor guessed my birth date for my birth certificate—there weren't good records about my birth in China, so we don't

know the date for sure. We celebrate my birthday, but we also have a cake every year on February 4. That's the day I came home to live with my family. We call it Gotcha Day—the day they got me.

My family also celebrates holidays from my birth culture, such as Chinese New Year. My family thinks it's important to know about the country where I was born. I also try to teach my friends and classmates about my adoption so that everyone can understand me better.

Sometimes I wonder what my birth mother looks like and whether I have a twin. I don't think I would ever be able to find them if they were out there, but it still makes me curious.

When we were younger, my brother used to ask my mom to take me back to China whenever I played with his toys for too long. We laugh about that now because we have become the best of friends. My family loves me very much, and I love them back!

My name is Nicole H., and I was adopted by my foster family. I'm 13 now, but I lived with my birth mom until I was seven years old.

My birth mom had been raising my two younger brothers and me by herself. She had some pretty serious problems, and she just wasn't able to take care of us. When a parent can't take good care of her kids, sometimes the government sends the kids to

live with foster families. That's what happened with us. Foster families let children live with them if they can't live with their birth parents. I knew I hadn't been living in a good place, and I didn't cry that much when we left. Most of our stuff got left behind, but we really didn't have much, anyway.

I stayed with one foster family that first night, and then I was placed with my new family. Four years later, they adopted me. It happened a

few days before my birthday, and it was the best birthday present ever! I got a new birth certificate with my new parents' names on it, and I got a new last name.

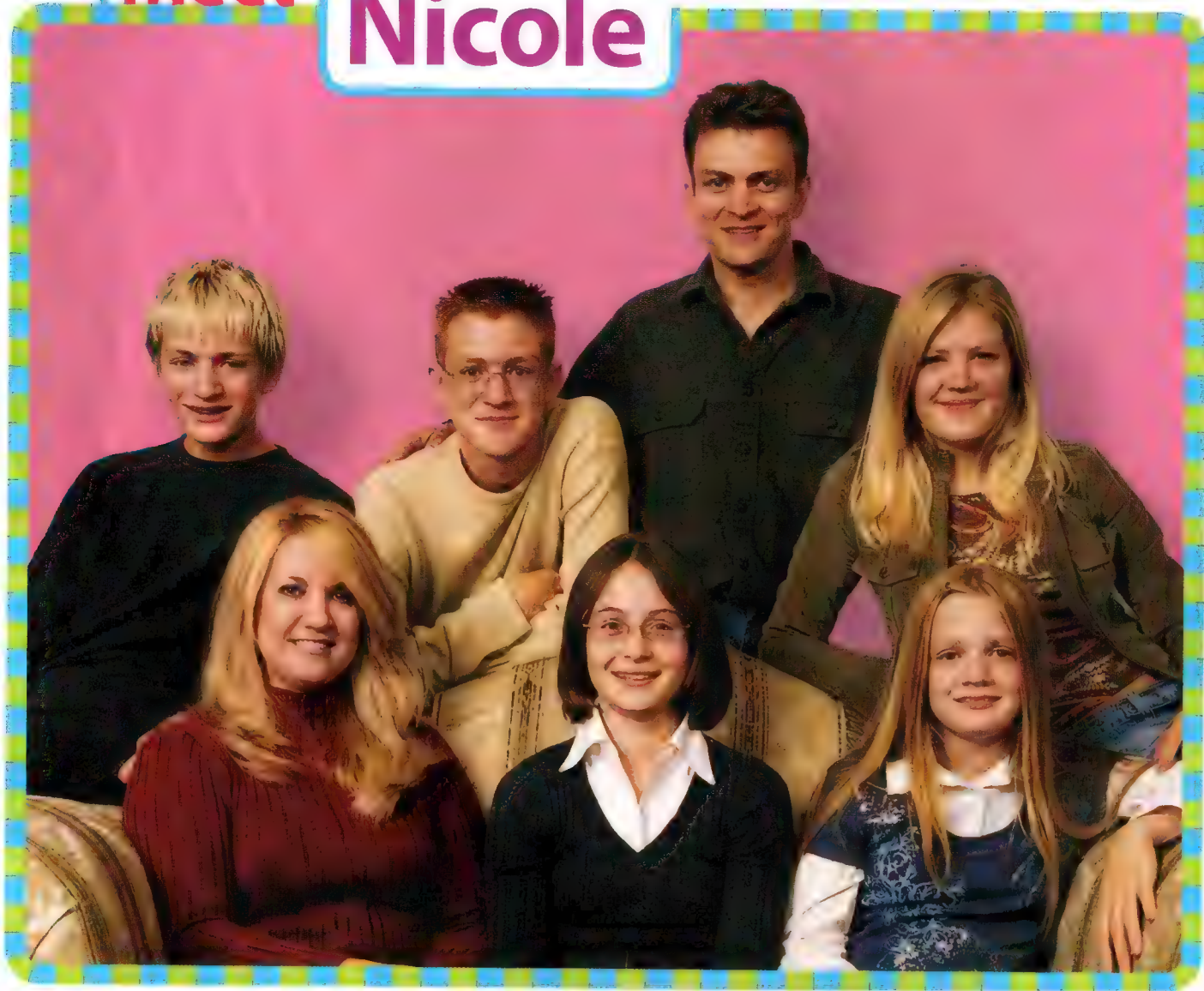
The best part about being adopted is spending time with my mom. For me, adoption feels just like being born into a family because everyone gets to know each other so well.

One of my birth brothers has been adopted by another

family, and the other lives in a group home. I get to see my brothers sometimes. I don't think about my birth mother.

Sometimes it's tough because some people can be really nosy about my adoption. I just tell the people who ask rude questions that I would rather not talk about it because I'm really not different from other girls. I feel so lucky and so happy to have found a family. And I feel very loved.

Meet Nicole



This is Nicole's brother Ryan, mom Lorraine, brother Christopher, Nicole, dad Curtis, sister Cortney, and sister Taylor.

Photo: Charles Harris

Meet

Ashley

Adoption Advice

We got almost 300 letters from readers who are adopted. Many of these girls wanted other readers to know that there's nothing wrong with being adopted and that they're just like other girls.

Here are some tips for talking to your friend or classmate about her adoption:

- Adopted girls aren't treated differently in their families, so friends and classmates shouldn't single them out, either.

- Not every adopted girl is comfortable talking about her adoption, so ask questions carefully. Respect your friend's privacy if she doesn't want to tell the story of her adoption.

- Many girls who were born and adopted in the United States didn't live in orphanages. Orphanages in this country mostly have been replaced by foster care with families.

- Ask an adopted girl about her "birth parents" if you want to know about the people who brought her into the world. Her "real parents" are the people who take care of her every day. ✨

Photo: Olivier Laude



This is Ashley's sister Haley, dad Kevin, Ashley, mom Michelle, and brother Bailey.

My name is Ashley J., and I was adopted by my stepmother. My birth mother left my dad and me when I was one year old. For about two years after that, it was just my dad and me on our own. But one day he met a wonderful woman, and they decided to get married.

I had called her "Mom" since the day she married my dad, but when I was in fourth grade, my stepmom decided to adopt me. I was so happy! It was the greatest thing.

After about six months of legal work, we went to court and signed some

papers, and that was it. I got a new birth certificate with my adoptive mom's name on it. When it's finally done and you know you're adopted, it's such a good feeling.

I'm 13 now. I really don't wonder about my birth mom very often, but sometimes I wonder where she is right at that moment or what she's doing. Sometimes I wonder if she's thinking about me, but not very often.

Along with my two parents, I also have a sister and a brother. They're a lot younger than me, and we don't always get along. But that's just normal family stuff.

They don't treat me differently because I'm adopted.

Nobody at school gives me a hard time about being adopted. People usually don't ask about it. I just come out and tell people, and everybody seems to think it's pretty cool.

Being adopted hasn't been as hard for me as it might be for other girls. I was always with my dad, and I didn't have to adjust to a new home. I don't remember a lot about my life before my adoptive mom. I really love her, and I feel so blessed that someone like her decided to adopt me.

Brainwaves

activities and puzzles

Twice the Fun!

It's "Twins Ski Free" day at Double-You slopes. Circle all the twins who got in free. Note: Twins wore identical ski outfits.



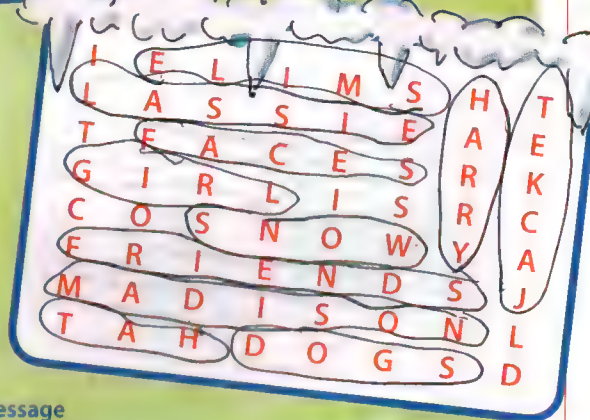


Illustrations: Paul Meisel

Photo Fun

Look in the word search below to find 11 things from this photo of Madison M., age 12, from Colorado, and her dogs, Harry and Lassie. Words run across and down and each letter is used only once.

Leftover letters reading from top to bottom will spell out a message.



Message

I t i s
c o l d!



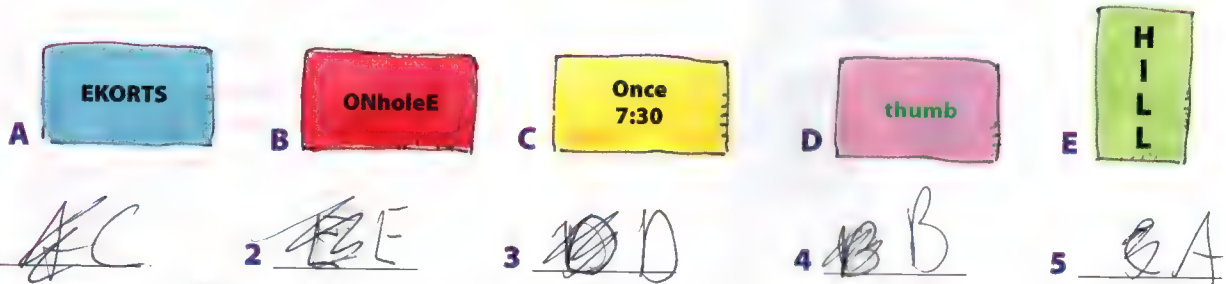
Party Picks

A friend asked you to pick up party hats for her New Year's Day bash.
Read her instructions, then circle the best hat to buy.



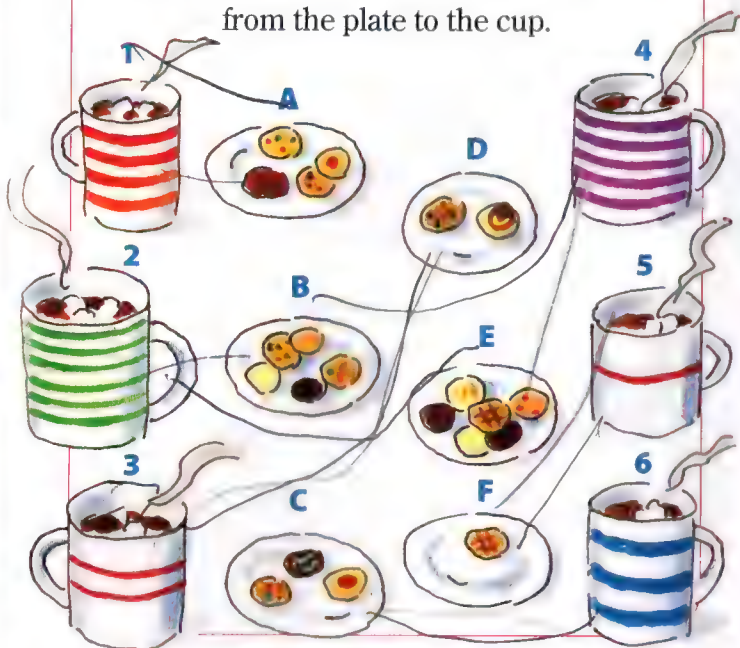
Wacky Wordies

Figure out each message, then write the letter above the girl it best fits.



Cup Code

Try to figure out which cup of cocoa goes with which plate of cookies. Once you've cracked the code, draw a line from the plate to the cup.



Art Sleuth

Search the pages of this issue to find where each snippet of the photo or illustration shown below came from. Write down the page number where you found it.



Laffateria

Why don't mountains get cold in the winter?

Because they wear snowcaps!

Natalie H.
Age 11, Wisconsin

What's a polar bear's favorite food?

Isabella P.
Age 9, Colorado

Why did Jill rub peanut butter on the road?

Rebecca J.
Age 12, New York

Funny Business

Send your best joke to Brain Waves! Write to the address on page 2. Include your name, birth date, school photo, and signature.



Can You Do It?

Get your winter gear ready for these quick challenges!

Foot Warmers

Gather up a collection of socks in any sizes or colors, and see how many you can put on one foot in 60 seconds. Our testers averaged 10 socks! Tip: Start with the thinner socks first.

I put on _____ socks.



Frozen Lips

Divide girls into two teams. Tell players that thanks to a winter storm, everyone's lips are frozen shut. Now ask each team to try to be the first to get players lined up based on each girl's birthday. So a player born January 1 would be first in line. No speaking!

Best frozen lips team: _____

Mitten Mouth

Secretly dare a friend to see who can be the first to get another friend or family member to say "mitten." For instance, ask, "Meg, what are those things that you wear on your hands in winter?" Challenge: See if you can do this without speaking!

Fastest mitten mouth: _____



Answer Box

You'll find 31 hearts in this issue!

Behind the Scenes

Myriad is used on page 29.

Buzzword

1. page 48; 2. page 46; 3. page 12; 4. page 19

Art Sleuth

1A; 2E; 3D; 4B; 5F; 6C

Cup Code

one); 5A (backstroke) hill); 3D (green thumb); 4B (hole in- 1C (once upon a time); 2E (down-

Wacky Wordies

The best hat to buy is D.

Party Picks



It is cold!

Photo Fun



There are 14 sets of twins.

Twice the Fun!



HELP!

Dear American Girl,

Whenever I get a haircut, my mom always makes sure it's super short. I've talked to her about how I want longer hair so I can put it in ponytails, but she just says I look cuter with it short.

NOT a cutie pie

It's your hair, so you should have a say in how it's styled. Look through magazines and find a picture of a hairstyle you'd like to have. Then talk to your mom again. Show her the picture and tell her why you like it. Let her know you can do the extra work it takes to keep longer hair looking nice. If you act mature (which means no whining!), she'll be more likely to agree. Good luck!



Dear American Girl,

I have one set of "best friends" necklaces, but I have two best friends. I can't decide which one of my friends to give the necklace to, and I don't have enough money to buy another necklace.

Can't Choose!

Careful! By choosing just one "best" friend, you could end up hurting your other friend's feelings—a lot.



Keeping both of these friends is more important than the necklaces, right? So put the necklaces away for now. Later, if you can afford another set of necklaces, you can give one to each friend then.



Dear American Girl,

My sister is three years younger, and she is really smart. She is almost as good at reading as I am and she's better than I am at spelling. When I'm studying spelling, she looks over my shoulder and says, "That's an easy one. I can spell that." She's such a show-off. What can I do?

Stupid!

First of all, the fact that your sister can spell doesn't make you stupid. Showing off is just a way for her to get your attention, because she

probably looks up to you. Instead of competing, take advantage of your sister's spelling smarts and ask her to help you study. Go through your list of words and quiz her on each one. Following along as she spells will help you learn the words, too. When you feel you know the words, she can quiz you.



Dear American Girl,

Everywhere I go, people are always commenting on how much I've grown. I never know what to say back to them. Please give me some ideas!

Growing too much

You could make a joke. Say, "You really think I've grown a lot? Phew! I thought everyone else has been shrinking." Or say, "Yeah, it's a good thing short pants are in style, because that's all I have now." Lots of times, people will comment on your height just to start a conversation. When that happens, you can say, "Yes, I'm growing like crazy. But the real news is that I got a role in the school play/my team won a game/ I saw a great movie," etc. Then talk about what interests you!

MORE HELP!

Dear American Girl,

I have a crush on a movie star. I really wish I did not. I have had dreams about him, and I sometimes find myself wishing to be his wife. Is there any way to stop?

crush

Think about what it is you like about this actor. Sure, he's cute, but what else? Make a list of the qualities you think are important in a person, and see what it says about you. Remember that what you have seen of this guy in the movies probably isn't what he's like in real life, so don't let yourself spend too much time dwelling on Mister Moviestar. Staying busy with friends and activities will help you keep your mind off him.

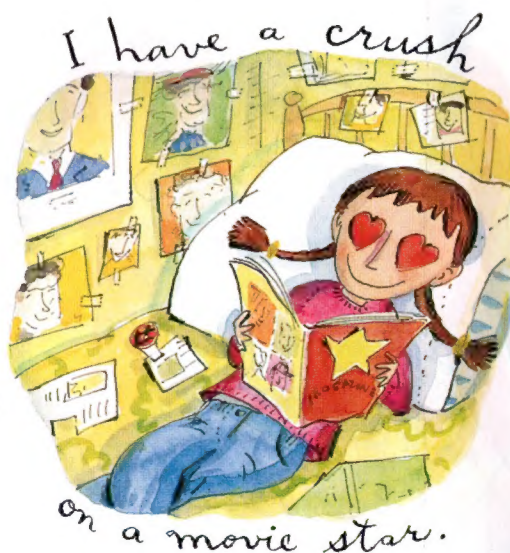


Dear American Girl,

I have a problem and I'm afraid to tell my parents about it because I think they'll yell at me. What should I do?

Stuck

Pick a moment when your parents are calm and have time to talk. Then take a deep breath and tell them. Chances are, they'll find out about



your problem anyway, so it's better for them to hear about it from you. If they think you tried to cover up the problem, they'll probably be even more upset. It takes guts to 'fess up when you think someone will get mad, but it's the right thing to do.



Dear American Girl,

I have a friend who's always late. She'll be at least half an hour late and not be aware of how blown-off people feel. My friends and I have talked to her about it, and she told us it was her parents' fault. It probably is, but I just don't feel like our friendship can go on like this.

See You Later

You can't blame your friend for what her parents are doing, so plan

ahead. If you need to leave for a movie by four o'clock, tell her to be at your house at three-thirty. That way, if she's late, you will still be able to leave on time. Another option is to spend more time at your friend's house so that you're not stuck somewhere waiting for her. You can also talk to her again about your feelings, but be sensitive. Remember: no one is perfect. It's better to accept the fact that sometimes your friend will be late than to lose your friendship over it.



Advice from You

"If you're nervous about auditioning for something, just remember that your friends and family will still love you if you don't make it."

Kristi H.

Age 13, New York

Need advice? Got advice? Write: Help!

American Girl magazine™

8400 Fairway Place
Middleton, WI 53562

Photos: John McArthur, Mike Walker, Jamie Young, Styling: Judy Reader, Christine Stahl



Kristin I. tried on many different outfits at our cover photo shoot. Do you like the clothes we chose? Vote for your favorite at "Fun for Girls" at americangirl.com.



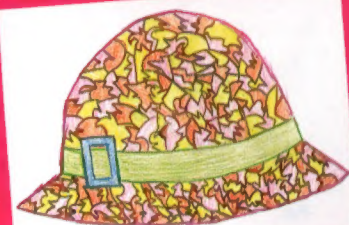
Each heart was carefully hung at the photo shoot.



Our craft room was full of beautiful beads in order to make the "Bead My Valentine" hearts.



Hats off to all of you who entered our hat design contest. Go to "Fun for Girls" at americangirl.com to see more creative caps.



Rachel B. and Edy J., both age 12, Washington



We ♥ Dannielle A., age 19
She's been getting AG ever since she was 9!



For more quizzes and games, go to "Fun for Girls" at americangirl.com.

No Spring Break Trip?

Have a great time without leaving home.



Do a Doodle!

Cute and easy drawings to try



American Girl

Coming up in the March/April issue

For more fun, visit
americangirl.com!
Share your thoughts
and opinions in
"You Said It!"

Friends Forever

More friendship advice
you can use

Easter Egg-stravaganza

A rainbow of egg-coloring
crafts you'll love



Save the Earth

See the winners of our
invention contest!

Whoa, Nellie!

All kinds of fun stuff to read
about horses

